

# WESTERN DAKOTA TECH

800 Mickelson Dr. • Rapid City, SD 57703

p. (800)544-8765 p. (605)394-4034 f. (605)394-2204

February 2019

Nick Wendell  
South Dakota Board of Technical Education  
800 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291

Dear Nick:

Please accept this letter as notification that Western Dakota Tech is modifying its offerings under the Business & Technology program. An embedded diploma in Hospitality will be offered effective in the Fall 2019 semester. The diploma will meet the high need of the local hospitality industry, as well as, increase career opportunities for our students.

Being centrally located within an hour of six national memorials, monuments, or parks, the need for hospitality workers is an on-going concern. The most recent annual report from the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce states there are over 4,500 hotel rooms in our area; therefore, the employment outlook is positive for those in the hospitality field. According to the SD Tourism Department, in 2016 the tourism industry once again reached record numbers of visitors. This marks seven consecutive years of economic growth for the tourism industry. Other 2016 state-wide statistics include:

- 13.9 million – number of visitors that came to South Dakota, an increase of 1.4%
- \$3.8 billion – amount of visitor spending, an increase of 1.5%
- \$2.5 billion – amount of GDP contributed to the state's economy, an increase of 4.5%
- \$279 million – state and local tax dollars generated by tourism activity, an increase of \$8.4 million
- \$821 – the amount of tax dollars each SD household saves because of the tourism industry
- 53,258 – number of jobs sustained by the tourism industry, an increase of 2.1%

<https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/newsroom/press-releases/tourism-news-releases/Tourism-Department-Posts-Record-Numbers-2016>

Labor market information for the state indicates that the demand for workers in the hospitality field is strong now and in the future. Through 2026, the number of hospitality positions is expected to grow by 11% percent, according to the South Dakota Labor Market Information Center (LMIC).

Working with representatives from the hospitality industry from our local community, this diploma option has been designed to provide students with the necessary education and training consistent with current industry practices in hospitality while also incorporating already established foundational courses from our Business and Accounting programs. This request came directly from representatives of Liv Hospitality, LLC, an independent, professional hospitality management company featuring award-winning properties near some of the most sought-after vacation destinations in the country. Local Liv Hospitality facilities include the largest indoor waterpark in the Dakotas and full-service gaming resorts. Additionally,

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the Liv Hotel Group specializes in the development, ownership, marketing, and management of over 12 Black Hills hotels, resort properties, restaurants, gaming establishments, and bars in the Deadwood and Rapid City markets. Feedback provided to Western Dakota Tech from Liv Hospitality was instrumental in the development of the hospitality emphasis. Liv Hospitality specifically requested that the hospitality track have a stronger emphasis on internship options in both hotel / lodging operations and food / beverage operations. Liv has also committed to providing internships sites at their varying establishments. Liv was recently awarded the StartTodaySD Apprenticeship Grant through the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation to help fund internship opportunities.

Graduates of this hospitality diploma will be able to seek employment in a variety of settings. As of the date of this letter, Liv Hospitality has the following job openings that a graduate of this diploma option would be qualified for: Assistant General Manager; General Manager; Front Office Manager; Director of Sales; Sales Manager; Marketing Coordinator/Manager; Food & Beverage Manager; Food & Beverage Director; Paddy's Manager; Vertex Manager; Slider's Bar & Grill Manager; Assistant Housekeeper; Executive Housekeeper; Banquets Manager; Accounts Receivable; Assistant Waterpark Manager; Breakfast Attendant. The average salary for the job positions listed above is \$35,000 to \$70,000 per year depending on the position.

Western Dakota Tech is also currently working with the Rapid City Area Schools in their development of career pathways. Part of their strategic plan is to prepare students for success beyond high school graduation. Workforce development and pathway initiatives will help ensure high school graduates have the academic, technical and employability skills needed to be prepared for the full range of post-secondary opportunities. Hospitality is a current track in this pathways initiative so high school students will have opportunities for dual credit.

Furthermore, students who complete the Business – Hospitality diploma option and decide to return to Western Dakota Tech in the future, will be able to enter a seamless pathway into the Business & Technology Associate of Applied Science degree.

In summary, the addition of this diploma option to the Business & Technology program is a great benefit to the students and local industry employers. Additionally, these changes better align the programs with the WDT mission "...a commitment to academic excellence to teach the knowledge, skills, and behaviors students need to be successful."

The CIP code for this Business - Hospitality diploma will be 52.0909.

Please let me know if you have further questions.

Respectfully,



Dr. Bolman  
President





February 20, 2019

President Bolman  
Western Dakota Tech  
800 Mickelson Drive  
Rapid City, SD 57703

President Bolman,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the proposal Western Dakota Tech is submitting for a hospitality diploma option as part of their already established Business & Technology program.

Tourism is the second largest industry in South Dakota and yet the industry is challenged with finding qualified employees. It is critical that a highly trained workforce is available to serve our industry now and into the future. Based on feedback provided by Liv Hospitality, we believe Western Dakota Tech has created a solution help us with this challenge.

Liv Hospitality fully supports the efforts of Western Dakota Tech as it seeks approval to establish this diploma option. We are also committed to supporting Western Dakota Tech with internship opportunities in our facilities and serving on advisory boards.

Liv Well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynzie Montague".

Lynzie Montague  
Vice President  
Liv Hospitality  
lmontague@livhotelgroup.com